

Lick Creek Water Project

Lick Creek Water Project Groundbreaking

Dickenson County, Virginia

June 13, 2005

I am pleased to return to Dickenson County this morning to participate in the groundbreaking ceremony for a new public water project for the residents of the Lick Creek community.

Today's groundbreaking is the fourth major event held this spring in Dickenson County to mark the establishment or improvement of public drinking water service. In April, I joined Dickenson County officials in celebrating the beginning of the new public water service for 260 homes and businesses in the communities of Bear Pen Creek, Cutter Creek and Pine Creek. Later that month, we gathered again to break ground for the very large Big Caney Water Improvement project - a \$9.5 million effort which will improve the public water service for 1/3 of all Dickenson County residents. Last month, many of us gathered here today were also present at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Lick Fork community which will establish new public water service for 29 households.

These projects, all of which have obtained significant amounts of federal financial support, are outstanding examples of the progress we are making in Dickenson County in establishing public water and sewer infrastructure for residents.

Approximately 20 years ago, only 40 percent of Dickenson County residents had access to publicly provided drinking water. Since that time, we have actively worked to obtain millions in federal funding to establish new water systems in Dickenson County, including \$32 million in the past 10 years alone. Today, everyone here can proudly acknowledge that this work on the part of many people has born fruit. Today, 79 percent of all Dickenson County homes have access to publicly funded water systems, and that percentage will increase to 85 percent following the completion later this year of the Lick Fork project and the infrastructure project for which we are breaking ground today here in Lick Creek.

The total cost of construction for the Lick Creek water project is \$2,595,700, all of which is being provided through several different federal funding sources. In 2003, I announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture, through its Rural Utilities Service, had agreed to my request to provide \$1,295,700 for the Lick Creek infrastructure project. Of that total amount, \$971,700 was provided as a federal grant, and \$324,000 was provided through a low-interest federal loan. Later that year, I announced a second federal grant in the amount of \$500,000 from the Appalachian Regional Commission. In addition to these funds, a federal Community Development Block Grant in the amount of \$800,000 has been secured to complete the funding package necessary for the water project.

Residents of the Lick Creek community currently have no access to a public water system. Rather, residents have no choice other than to rely on private wells and springs for their drinking water, which are not reliable and require multiple filter systems to ensure that the water is safe and healthy for drinking and other household uses.

The new public water system for which we are breaking ground today will serve 155 households and two churches in the Lick Creek community.

Using the allocated federal funds, 19 miles of new water lines will be installed along Routes 604, 663, 679 and 745 in Dickenson County. In addition, three pump stations will be constructed on Routes 604, 679 and 745. Two 10,000 gallon water storage tanks and one smaller water pressure tank will be installed near the new pump stations. The new water lines will be maintained by the Dickenson County Public Service Authority, and it is expected that the public water service will be available to residents this fall.

There are several individuals who deserve our thanks today for the efforts they have made on behalf of this project and their commitment to establishing safe and reliable drinking water for the residents of Dickenson County, and I will take the opportunity of these remarks to recognize these individuals.

I would like to commend Paul Buchanan, Chairman of the Dickenson County Board of Supervisors; Scott Moore, Vice Chairman and the Lick Creek representative on the Board; Gene Counts, who represents a portion of the service area on the Board of Supervisors; and other Members of the Board; for their leadership and foresight in working to establish reliable water service for all of Dickenson County.

I also want to thank Damon Rasnick, Chairman of the Dickenson County Public Service Authority; Ron Phillips, Executive Director of the PSA; the excellent staff at the PSA; and Keith Viers, Dickenson County Administrator. Without these dedicated individuals, we would not be celebrating the outstanding strides Dickenson County is making in infrastructure development.

I would also like to recognize Carroll Edwards and Diana Counts, two Lick Creek residents who have worked tirelessly in support of this project.

I would also like to commend Andy Chafin, Director of the Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission, and his staff, as well as Leman Kendrick, for lending their expertise to the project.

Finally, I want to thank my District Director, Laura Lee, and my Project Manager, Courtney Lamie, for their persistent and persuasive work in achieving this success. Their outstanding work has substantially contributed to the success that we celebrate today.

Today's ceremony is an example of what can be achieved when citizens and government officials at the local and federal levels work together in aid of a common purpose. For that cooperation and successful work in establishing public water service for the Lick Creek community, I want to commend everyone here and offer special congratulations to the residents and business owners who will be receiving the new water service.